

The Cottage: Findings from an evaluation of SVHM homelessness services (2015)

What is The Cottage?

The Cottage is a supportive, home like environment where Complex Care Services and Hospital in the Home (HITH) services are provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The aim is to provide holistic, recuperative care to clients with a nursing need, as an alternative to staying in hospital. The Cottage focuses on building rapport and trust between clients and staff, enabling staff to establish a safe environment and platform from which they can address clients' health issues.

Staff at The Cottage include nurses, who provide HITH services to clients and assist clients in managing their medication, and personal care workers.

"it's there to provide people with space when they're in difficult circumstances so they don't have to immediately have to address things; so that they are given space to either a lesser or a greater extent to work through those things."

- Client

Cottage Service Usage in 2015

- 167** episodes of acute care
- 9** days average length of care
- 26%** supported by other SVHM homelessness services



Who used the Cottage in 2015?

139 experiencing or at risk of homelessness were supported

75% male
25% female

46 average age

69% born in Australia

6% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A Cottage Case Study:

A Cottage client in his mid-forties has a long history of substance dependency issues, has issues with aggression and has an acquired brain injury. He first stayed at The Cottage in Sept. 2015 after several ED presentations in the previous two years.

In the six months prior to receiving support from The Cottage he had two ED presentations and a hospital admission at an estimated cost of \$23,510.

In the six months after contact with The Cottage he has only had one ED presentation and was treated and discharged within three hours. The estimated cost of this presentation is \$820. This reduction in unplanned admissions has a potential cost saving of \$22,690.

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Health Profile of Cottage Clients

Primary diagnoses at commencement:

- 19%** substance abuse causing mental and behavior disorders
- 9%** injuries and fractures
- 23%** post-op non orthopaedic procedure

Other issues experienced:

- 85%** daily living issues
- 75%** carer issues
- 74%** isolation Issues



Impact of The Cottage on Healthcare Utilisation

Overall in the six months after episode of care commencement with The Cottage:

- 9%** increase in ED presentations
- 5%** reduction of total time spent in ED
- 25%** reduction in the number of unplanned inpatient admissions
- 45%** increase in the number of outpatient appointments attended

Cost Reductions Associated with Changes in Service Utilisation

Evaluation findings add to the growing evidence that targeted interventions for people experiencing homelessness can reduce their use of more acute hospital services.

For the 103 people who had contact with The Cottage only, there was an average cost increase of:

\$2,890 per person in the six months following service contact

For the 36 people who had contact with both The Cottage and ALERT, there was an average cost decrease of:

\$3,529 per person in the six months following service contact

"If we can see that someone after they've left The Cottage is coming to outpatients, for instance, attending outpatients appointments, hasn't had any re-admissions related to the original diagnosis, like if they've come in with a fall post-detox they haven't had any repeat admissions for that... or if they're not coming back with a re-occurrence of cellulitis that's a good outcome from a medical point of view." – Service staff